Why Everyone Suddenly Cares About Greenland

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Greenland has barely registered in global politics for much of modern history. Until recent weeks, it was regarded as a far-away, ice-covered territory at the edge of world affairs, with very limited influence. The world's largest island has now been thrust into the foreground by the US as a focal point for questions about trade routes, security, and access to the Arctic. Today, it's a pivot point militarily, economically, and geopolitically – why does it seem like everyone, everywhere, cares all of a sudden?

Greenland Never Stopped Mattering to Military Strategy

Greenland's importance has not changed, even if the recent spotlight makes it feel that way. The island sits astride the shortest route between North America and Eurasia. That means that any long-range missile, bomber, or hypersonic system launched between the US and Russia would need to pass near or directly over Greenland. From Washington's point of view, it's a strategic necessity rather than a diplomatic provocation, and the island plays a key role in the defence of North America.

The US has therefore always maintained a permanent military presence there since the Cold War. The Pituffik base (previously known as Thule) is equipped with space-surveillance equipment, missile-detection radars, and early-warning systems. These capabilities are not symbolic – they are foundational to nuclear deterrence, missile defence, and space situational awareness.

Greenland Never Stopped Mattering to the Navy

Greenland is also part of the Greenland-Iceland-UK (GIUK) gap, a North Atlantic corridor that's long been used to track Russian submarine movements from the Arctic into the Atlantic. During the Cold War, this chokepoint was critical for tracking Soviet naval assets – and it's becoming so again.

Russia has been investing heavily in modernising its Arctic bases and fleet of submarines. China – despite not being an Arctic state – has declared itself a "near-Arctic power", increasing its polar presence and research. From Washington's perspective, allowing either power

to establish meaningful infrastructure or influence on the island would be strategically unacceptable.

As such, the US interest in Greenland is framed as a necessity. Controlling observation points, airfields, ports, and undersea awareness in the High North is about preventing rivals from gaining leverage.

Ice Melts, New Shipping Routes Emerge

The retreat of Arctic ice is most commonly discussed in environmental terms, but it's the geopolitical consequences that will be felt first. New sea routes are becoming viable – at least during parts of the year – with the Northwest Passage and potential transpolar routes dramatically shortening shipping distances between North America, Europe, and Asia.

Greenland lies along these emerging corridors. Any serious shipping regime using the Arctic will need ports, refuelling hubs, surveillance infrastructure, enforcement mechanisms, and search-and-rescue capabilities. Controlling those assets – and preventing Russia and China from doing so – is a priority for the US.

Critical Minerals and Industrial Capacity

Security today is inseparable from industrial power. Greenland holds significant, undeveloped reserves of uranium, rare earth elements, and other critical minerals essential for electronics, aerospace, weapons systems, batteries, and advanced manufacturing.

China currently dominates many of these supply chains, which is widely recognised in the West as a huge strategic disadvantage. Diversifying material sources is now a national security objective rather than an economic preference. Greenland offers a Western-aligned alternative to Chinese supply chains – one that's geographically closer, politically linked to NATO, and comparatively stable.

The US is therefore not focusing on short-term extraction, but rather on long-term positioning. The goal is to secure Western access to key materials instead of relying on rival powers. Strategic and financial tools are already in place to support mining and infrastructure development on the island, and the US wants to make sure these resources contribute to Western supply chains.

How Europe Missed a Massive Opportunity

For the European Union, Greenland represents missed opportunities and slow decision making. Despite frequent talk about "strategic autonomy", the EU has struggled to translate its ambitions into action. Environmental restrictions, political caution, and regulatory delays have severely limited European engagement in security, mining, and infrastructure projects on the island.

Europe, therefore, is set to watch from the sidelines while the US secures long-term access to Greenland's resources. In typical fashion, the EU has responded with procedures and debate instead of concrete commitments. These political constraints mean many of the resources that Europe says it needs for its own industrial and technological goals are now edging closer to US control.

Meanwhile, Denmark – who was formally responsible for Greenland's defence – has effectively deferred to US leadership in the Arctic, and other European states have only offered statements of concern in response.

Final Thought

Greenland's rise in global importance is the predictable outcome of geography meeting scarcity, technology meeting power, and a world reorganising around security of supply and access. Greenland always mattered. But the scramble for influence is accelerating, and new opportunities reveal themselves in the melting ice of the Arctic.

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I'm George Calder — a lifelong truth-seeker, data enthusiast, and unapologetic question-asker. I've spent the better part of two decades digging through documents, decoding statistics, and challenging narratives that don't hold up under scrutiny. My writing isn't about opinion — it's about evidence, logic, and clarity. If it can't be backed up, it doesn't belong in the story. Before joining Expose News, I worked in academic research and policy analysis, which taught me one thing: the truth is rarely loud, but it's always there — if you know where to look. I write because the public deserves more than headlines. You deserve context, transparency, and the freedom to think critically. Whether I'm unpacking a government report, analysing medical data, or exposing media bias, my goal is simple: cut through the noise and deliver the facts. When I'm not writing, you'll find me hiking, reading obscure history books, or experimenting with recipes that never quite turn out right.
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